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AUTHOR Tuck, Kathy D.
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ABSTRACT

Current societal problems and increasing pressures on youth has prompted school systems to infuse values education into the curriculum. Information pertaining to the development and hierarchy of values in students is highly sought after. A random sample of 2,342 students in grades 4-12 were administered the Survey of Values addressing six domains: educational; moral; social; spiritual; cultural; and self. Administrators, teachers and support staff were given similar surveys. The hierarchy of individual values for students showed self-concept of ability and family ties to be highest and self-doubt and susceptibility to academic peer influence as lowest. While staff members were higher than students on their over-all value index, they were only slightly higher on individual values composition. Findings support the premises that values are multidimensional and formation of values proceeds through stages of maturity. Data are presented in tables and graphs. (16 references) (EJS)

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VALUES EDUCATION:
A DEVELOPMENTAL STRATEGY

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Presented By:

Kathy D. Tuck, Ph.D.
Senior Research Associate
Research and Evaluation Branch
Washington, D.C. Public Schools

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With current societal problems and increasing pressures on our youth, more and more school systems have begun to infuse values education into the school curriculum. Therefore, information pertaining to the development of values in students and the hierarchial nature with which values tend to be organized is sought for the strategic implementation of a values education plan.

Generally, the assumption is that values exists in a hierarchy, (Rokeach, 1973), and after a new value is learned it becomes integrated further into an organized system of other values. Researchers further argue that the value system is stable enough to allow for sameness and continuity of a unique personality, and yet unstable enough to permit change and rearrangement of value priorities as a result of change in culture, society and personal experiences (Aronfreed, 1976).

Much attention has also been given to the formation of values and prosocial behaviors, particularly at the transition periods from childhood to adolescence and during adolescence. Such notables as Erikson (1963), Kohlberg (1963, 1975 and 1981) and Piaget (1932/1965) provide theoretical positions regarding the systematic maturation of values. Although they differ in their views regarding the timing of the process, these and other researchers all agree that development of values is closely linked to cognitive skills and must proceed through invariant sequences.

While developmental psychologists who have studied the development of morals and prosocial behaviors have looked primarily to the childhood and adolescent years for evidence of developmental shifts (DePalma, 1974; Kohlberg and Gillian, 1971), social psychologists who have studied morals and values in adults have not made links with developmental issues (Rokeach, 1973). In an attempt to bridge this gap, D.C. Public Schools conceived a study to examine the formation of several value domains across childhood, adolescence, and on into adulthood.

This study examined the hierarchy of values in students, and explored developmental trends across grade level and gender. Attention was also given to relationships between different values, and particularly their relationship with academic achievement.

Methodology

A random sample of 2,342 students in grades 4 through 12 participated in this study. Slightly more than one-half (53.4%) were female and nearly all (96.3%) were African-American; 2.0% were Hispanic, and less than 1% each were Asian (.9%) and White (.6%). Nearly one-fourth (21.2%) were elementary students, 41.8% were junior high students and 37.0% were senior high students.

Students were administered a Survey of Values by their homeroom

class teachers. Six primary value domains were addressed in the survey: educational, moral, social, spiritual, cultural and self values. The teacher read the survey aloud while the students read silently and recorded their responses. The student survey contained 50 items developed by the Research and Evaluation Branch of the school system, with the exception of 10 items included from the Rosenberg Inventory of Self-Esteem (Rosenberg, 1979). Scores on each item were based on a 4-point Likert scale of responses ranging from "completely true" to "completely false". Measures of internal reliability yielded alpha coefficients ranging from .45 to .94 for the individual domains of the survey. The validity of the scale domains was assessed using a concurrent criterion of "free-expression" of values. Using this criterion discriminant analyses determined that the assessed scale score in each value domain correctly predicted from 52% to 70% of the students who freely expressed value priorities for the respective domains. The assessment of three value domains (i.e., moral, social and spiritual) correctly predicted 63-70% of the students freely expressing a priority for these domains.

In addition to students, 1,093 central and school based administrators, teachers and support staff (instructional and logistical) were also administered a similar Survey of Values (items referring to the school context were changed to the work context for the staff). Two-thirds (67.4%) of the staff participants were female, the majority (94.1%) were African-American, 3.7% were White, 1.5% were Hispanic and less than 1% each were Asian (.6%) and American Indican (.2%). All had been employed with the school system from 1 to 46 years, with an average of 15 years experience.

To examine school and parental views towards the teaching of values in school, 1,133 teachers completed surveys regarding their attitudes and current classroom practices in values education, and 224 randomly selected parents of DCPS students completed a survey on their view of values education. The parents were asked to complete the survey with a specific child of theirs' in mind.

Findings

Values Formation

As shown in Table 1a., Principal Components Analyses identified several subcomponents within nearly all student value domains. For example, peer influence was factored into social peer influence and academic peer influence, materialism was factored into the value of material possessions and the value specifically for money, and moral values were distinguished into moral behaviors and moral consequences (moral values in this study were limited to general concepts of right and wrong).

As shown further in Table 1b., the school staff made fewer distinctions between components of the value domains. Unlike

students, they did not delineate subcomponents of moral values, peer influence or materialism.

Values Hierarchy

To examine the hierarchy of values, a standardized score was computed for each value subcomponent representing the acquired percentage of total possible points. After "positive" and "negative" value components were identified based on their zero-order correlation with the self-esteem, the overall value "index" was computed. Values which showed negative correlations with some aspect of the self-esteem and were significant beyond the .05 level of probability were conceptualized in this study to be "negative" values. These included social peer influence, academic peer influence, materialism, value specifically for money, cultural rigidity and self-doubt. To compute the overall index score, the scores computed for the positive values were summed into the index, while the scores for the negative components were, first, recomputed to reverse their point score (i.e., affirmative responses to the scale items received the lowest points) and then were summed into the total index score.

As shown in Figure A., students scored slightly below the mid-point on the overall scale index. The hierarchy of individual values showed that students were highest on their self-concept of ability and family ties, and lowest in their self-doubt and susceptibility to academic peer influence. In addition, it was found that while students scored well above the mid-point on all positive values, they also scored slightly above the mid-point on all negative values with the exception of academic peer influence and self-doubt.

Developmental Differences

As shown in Figure B., striking similarities were found between student and staff values. While the staff was higher than students on their overall value index, they were only slightly higher than students on their individual value components. Interestingly, however, they were lower than students in their value for education or specifically on beliefs regarding the impact of education on life's events.

Using a smaller subsample of students (n=234), significant differences were found between the males and females whereby the female students had higher value for moral behaviors, $F(1,218=3.63$, $p<.05)$ and cooperation, $F(1,218)=11.55$, $p<.001)$, while males had a higher value for money, $F(1,218=5.59$, $p<.01)$. As shown in Table 2, significant grade level effects were also noted for more than one-half of the value components, with all positive values, except self-worth, declining as grade level increased. Also, interestingly, academic peer influence appeared to be greater for older students while social or general peer influence was stronger among younger students.

Values and School Achievement

As further shown in Table 2, significant correlations were found between certain value components and school achievement. Language achievement seemed more highly correlated with the individual values than reading and math achievement. Interestingly, only math achievement appeared to be related to the value of cooperation and social peer influences. These relationships between values and achievement were sustained while controlling for grade level.

It was also found that values tend to mediate the relationship between self-esteem and school achievement. For example, a series of partial correlations revealed that relationships between achievement and self-esteem was no longer apparent when the value for education was controlled.

Values Reinforcement

As shown in Table 3, significant relationships were established between student values and values of the school-based staff. Multiple regression analyses (step-wise) showed that social, moral and spiritual values among the school staff was independently related to social, moral, spiritual and self values of students. For example, it was determined that assessed moral values among students in a particular school was directly correlated with the assessment of moral values of the staff in that school.

In addition, and examination of formal classroom interactions between teachers and students revealed that teacher practices were more related to student values than teacher attitudes or beliefs. In essence, students were more influenced by teacher behaviors than by their expressed viewpoints.

Conclusions

In summary, significant developmental trends were noted in this examination of values among students and adults. These findings fully support the research literature, first, in the premise that values are multidimensional, and second, that the formation of values proceed through sequences of maturation which are reliant upon the level of cognitive development and social experiences of the individual. This is evident by the finding that students showed clear distinctions between several of the value components, while the adult staff delineated between fewer components. These findings suggest that values undergo a fusion process, and become more aligned to form stable value domains as one gets older. Fewer delineations between the value subcomponents suggest fewer potential conflicts within the primary value domains.

Another finding of interest is that while students were found to be moderately low on their overall value index, this was not necessarily due to a lack of positive values, but more so to the excessive presence of "negative" values. For example, while students scored high on the strength of their family ties, racial pride and cooperation, they also scored high on such negative values as materialism and peer influence. These findings provide further evidence that students have values in conflict and suggest a critical need for values clarification. Also, the findings here provide support for other research showing that African-American students do not necessarily have low self-esteem. In fact, the self-concept of ability was the strongest of all values assessed among the students, and the feeling of self-worth was well above the scale mid-point.

Also, few differences were found between the male and female students in their values other than on the value for moral behaviors and cooperation. These findings concur with the research literature showing that boys tend to be more aggressive and slightly less altruistic. Moreover, developmental trends by grade indicate that adolescents experience a decline in certain positive values. These findings concur with the research literature, particularly the view of Erikson (1968) who asserts that adolescents experience a decline in prosocial behaviors because they are reevaluating themselves and their goals as they search for a stable identity.

However, certain negative values are also found to decline with the onset of adolescence. These findings tend to suggest that while adolescents are still attempting to clarify many of their positive values and attitudes, they are also beginning to identify and reconcile their value for negative influences, behaviors and attitudes. They are becoming more aware of value expectations for adults, which according to developmental literature, represents a substantial shift from the self-oriented behaviors and concerns that are tolerated and even encouraged in adolescents (Erikson, 1963, 1968).

In exploring the mediating role of values, particularly with regard to self-esteem and school achievement, this study shows that unless an individual has a heightened value for education and the whole notion of academic achievement, his or her academic failures or successes will not significantly affect the self-esteem. The research literature consistently supports the premise that referent-specific self-esteem is realized only when the referent is valued by the individual (Coopersmith, 1981; Kaplan, 1980). Researchers also agree that the relationship of the self-concept with academic achievement is mediated by other variables, and the valuing aspect of identification with school may be one important factor (Byrne, 1984; Pottenbaum, Keith and Ehly, 1986).

Finally, interactions between students and school staff were found to have a significant impact on student values. These relationships appear to be of sufficient magnitude and direction to state with some assurance that pervasive attitudes among school-

based staff impact on students even in the absence of formal or rigorous efforts on the part of the staff. Such interactions might be labeled as modeling or observational behaviors which, in some cases, the research literature argues that the amount of learning shown by the observer can be as great as that shown by the performer. For example, social psychologists such as Bandura (1977) explain that if a model demonstrates distorted behaviors, then the distorted pattern is learned by observation.

In all, the findings of this study demonstrate the complexity with which values are formed and the ease with which they are influenced through non-formal as well as formal interactions. These findings suggest that values education must be an interactive process focusing on the hierarchial development of values, and that values education will only be as effective as the environment in which it is implemented.

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TABLE 1A

Factor Loadings and Rotated Factor Matrices for Student Value Domains

Domain	Component	Item #	Factor 1	Factor 2	Total % Variance
EDUCATION		1	.70		
		2	.66		
		3	.72		
		4	.61		
		5	.60		
eigenvalue			1.81		36.2
MORALS			(behav)	(consq)	
		6	.62	.23	
		7	.65	.17	
		8	-.07	.82	
		9	.32	.60	
		10	.00	-.20	
eigenvalue			1.56	1.36	51.7
SOCIAL	COOPERATION				
		11	.50		
		12	.52		
		13	.51		
		14	.18		
eigenvalue			1.72		43.0
	PEER INFLUENCE				
			(acad)	(gen)	
		15	.78	.05	
		16	.76	-.01	
		17	.21	.72	
		18	-.16	.78	
eigenvalue			1.27	1.11	59.9
	MATERIALISM				
			(money)	(possess)	
		19	.28	.73	
		20	.85	.07	
		21	-.03	.86	
		22	.84	.14	
eigenvalue			1.88	1.03	71.8
SPIRITUAL			(will)	(fate)	
		23	.19	.73	
		24	.67	.04	
		25	.76	-.00	
		26	.62	-.69	
eigenvalue			1.86	1.08	56.8
CULTURAL	ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION				
			(pride)	(rigidity)	
		27	.03	.95	
		28	.67	.07	
		29	.69	.03	
		30	.62	-.37	
eigenvalue			1.38	1.00	59.8
	FAMILY TIES				
		31	.58		
		32	.76		
		33	.80		
		34	.56		
		35	.52		
eigenvalue			2.14		43.9
SELF-ESTEEM	GLOBAL				
			(worth)	(doubt)	
		36	.51	.15	
		37	.59	.77	
		38	.72	.06	
		39	.67	-.05	
		40	.51	.41	
		41	.13	.79	
		42	.66	-.02	
		43	-.03	.61	
		44	.45	.61	
		45	.60	.25	
eigenvalue			3.09	1.35	44.9
	SELF-CONCEPT OF ABILITY				
		46	.75		
		47	.80		
		48	.52		
		49	.78		
		50	.25		
eigenvalue			3.17		63.5

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TABLE 1B

Factor Loadings and Rotated Factor Matrices for Staff Value Domains

Domain	Component	Item #	Factor 1	Factor 2	Total % Variance
EDUCATION		1	.59		
		2	.21		
		3	.57		
		4	.53		
		5	.52		
eigenvalue			1.65		49.1
MORALS		6	.48		
		7	.17		
		8	.27		
		9	.40		
		10	.56		
eigenvalue			1.25		41.1
SOCIAL	COOPERATION	11	.51		
		12	.55		
		13	.59		
		14	.19		
eigenvalue			1.95		48.8
	PEER INFLUENCE	15	.51		
		16	.27		
		17	.54		
		18	.48		
eigenvalue			1.88		45.1
	MATERIALISM	19	.58		
		20	.27		
		21	.47		
		22	.61		
eigenvalue			1.98		48.8
SPIRITUAL			(will)	(fate)	
		23	.15	.88	
		24	.83	.03	
		25	.84	-.00	
		26	.46	-.52	
eigenvalue			1.69	1.05	48.8
CULTURAL	ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION		(pride)	(rigidity)	
		27	-.01	.89	
		28	.73	.08	
		29	.79	-.06	
		30	.75	-.06	
eigenvalue			1.74	1.00	68.7
	FAMILY TIES	31	.70		
		32	.86		
		33	.85		
		34	.66		
		35	.67		
eigenvalue			2.63		52.7
SELF-ESTEEM	GLOBAL		(worth)	(doubt)	
		36	.56	.28	
		37	.64	.61	
		38	.80	.20	
		39	.79	.10	
		40	.59	.64	
		41	.28	.65	
		42	.81	.12	
		43	.00	.00	
		44	.58	.34	
		45	.68	.23	
eigenvalue			4.73	1.00	57.6
	SELF-CONCEPT OF ABILITY	46	.78		
		47	.78		
		48	.74		
		49	.80		
		50	.41		
eigenvalue			2.44		48.8

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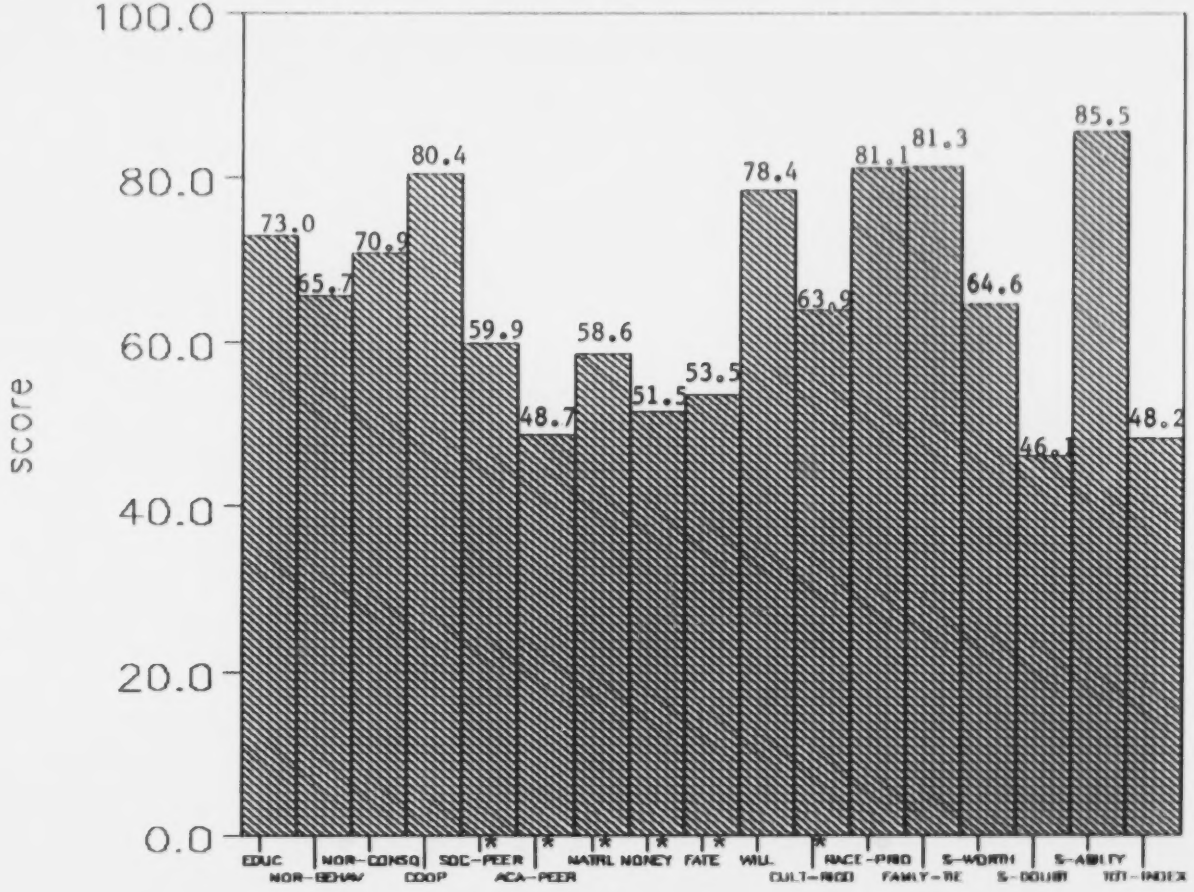
FIGURE A

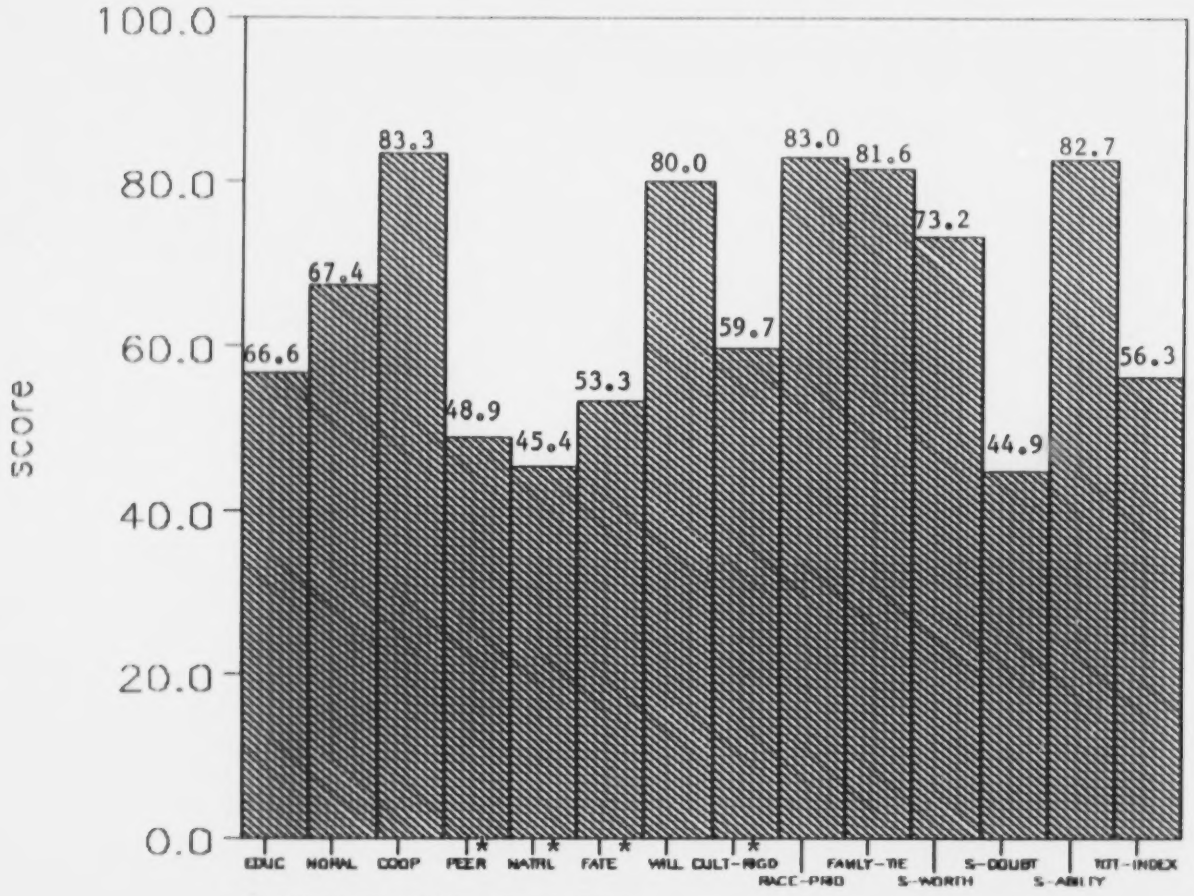
Hierarchy of Student Values



* Negative Value Components

FIGURE B

Hierarchy of Staff Values



* Negative Value Components

TABLE 2

Relationship Between Student Values, Grade Level and Achievement Scores

Values	Grade Level	CTBS Score: Reading	Language	Mathematics
		correlation coefficients (controlling for grade level)		
education	-.285**	.174	.279**	.205
moral behav	-.231**	.072	.174*	.081
moral conseq	-.126	.141	-.021	-.054
cooperation	-.074	.010	.151	.224*
gen peer influ	-.148*	.028	.052	.173* (.274*)
acad peer influ	.181**	.115	.187*	.054
material possess	-.182**	-.121	-.052	-.153
money	.041	-.000	-.108	-.012
spiritual will	-.018	.054	.016	.122
general fate	.157*	.176*	.074	.070
racial pride	-.001	.167	.195*	.091
cultural rigidity	-.063	-.022	-.017	-.097
family ties	-.206**	-.025	-.043	-.052
self-worth	.209**	.307**	.184*	.129
self-doubt	-.171**	.053	.072	.010
self-concept-abil	-.020	.058	-.025	-.049
Total Value Index	.053	.228**	.191** (.219*)	.073

NOTE: coefficients in parentheses reflect partial correlations controlling for both grade level and value for education

Level of significance:
* p<.05
** p<.01

TABLE 3

Reltionships Between Student and Staff Values
(Stepwise Multiple Regression Analyses)

Student Values	Related Staff Values	Beta Coeff.	R^2
education	-	-	-
moral behav	-	-	-
moral conseq	morals	.501	.228***
cooperation	-	-	-
gen peer influ	morals	-.424	.257**
	peer influ	-.340	
acad peer influ	family ties	-.604	.254**
	spiritual will	.402	
materialism	family ties	-.362	.107*
money	-	-	-
general fate	-	-	-
spiritual will	-	-	-
cultural rigidity	-	-	-
family ties	morals	.355	.100*
racial pride	-	-	-
self-worth	spiritual will	.377	.118**
self-doubt	-	-	-
self-ability	spiritual will	.332*	.085*
Overall Index	-	-	-

NOTE:
* p<.05
** p<.01
*** p<.001